



# ALABAMA GEOLOGIST

SUMMER 2005 EDITION

**ABLPG  
BOARD MEMBERS**

## ABLPG CELEBRATES 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the creation of the Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists. It marks the 15<sup>th</sup> year since the inception of the need for licensure in Alabama. The concept for licensure was promulgated by the Alabama Chapter of the American Institute of Professional Geologist in 1988 as a means of bringing together under one professional umbrella all the geologists working in Alabama, especially those working in the public arena. Since its inception and authorization by the Alabama Legislature, the Licensing Board has had much to do.

As with any new idea or change of the status quo there was some opposition from groups and individuals who mistakenly believed that for some reason licensure would curtail their right to work. What these individuals failed to understand was that geology as a viable profession was under severe attack from various groups who wanted to encroach on the professional expertise of those individuals who had sought and earned the right to call themselves a "Professional Geologist."

The original draft legislation was completed in 1991 and circulated to as many profes-

sional geologists in Alabama as were known at the time. Comments and suggestions were solicited and reviewed and where applicable, modifications to the draft legislation were made. The draft legislation was submitted to our legislative sponsors in the fall of 1992 for inclusion on the legislative calendar for 1993. It took three years to get the legislation before the Alabama Senate and House of Representatives for consideration and vote.

Many other licensing and trade organization were supportive of our legislation including; the Professional Engineers, Alabama Petroleum Council, Coal Bed Methane, Engineering Council and others. Many professional geologists joined the legislative lobbying effort to help ensure passage during the 1995 legislative session. The enabling Act was passed by the full legislature on July 26, 1995 as Act 95-399. The original Board was appointed by the Governor in September 1995. The original Board was composed of Tony Neathery, Fred Mason, Mary Moran, Mark Chapman, Roger Chapman, Chuck King, and Bob Cook. Each Board member could serve for a maximum of two full three year terms.

The first year of the Board's existence revolved around the development of a set of governing rules by which the Board operates. The first set of rules were drafted, approved and passed in June 1996. The Board called for applications in July 1996, and for the next two years was deeply committed in reviewing applications for licensure as well as conducting other administrative activities. In 1997, the Board began an exhaustive review and study of the Continuing Education requirements as mandated by the Act. Bob Cook was chair of this sub-committee and worked diligently to create a reasonable set of guidelines for the licensees to follow.

One great misunderstanding about Continuing Education continues to permeate the licensing process. Some individuals perceive Continuing Education as a restrictive effort to limit participation in the profession - which it is not. It has been my observation, that geologists are by their very nature, generally unassuming and somewhat reserved. Continuing Education is a real need by our profession. Geology has changed greatly in the past 50 years from a mining-oil patch-academia/government oriented profession to a very

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public oriented and visible profession dealing daily with many environmental issues where sound basic geologic principles are required to reach realistic and satisfactory solutions.

To be responsive to today's needs, the geologist must be current on the necessary rules and regulations that govern his/her work activity as well as a good grounding in the geologic principles that define our profession. The only way a geologist can accomplish this after graduation is to attend workshops, continuing education seminars or other forms of educational activities dealing with the latest issues confronting the respective job assignment. Without certification of attendance, professional work is often passed to someone else who has or can demonstrate the necessary qualifications regardless of their formal education. Our profession is constantly under attack by groups who consider themselves amply qualified to do many of the things that geologists learn and integrate into multiple working hypotheses as they undertake a problem. When the work fails or comes up short, the marginally trained individual usually walks away without fear of retribution — it's just a day's work. A professional geologist on the other hand sees it as a further challenge.

As with any organization just beginning, it was no different for the Licensure Board. Decisions had to be made as to office staff, location, operating budget, etc. Since the Licensure Board is an extension of the State of Alabama most of the operating procedures had to be developed and be consistent with the Alabama Code. This Administrative Code (Rules and Regulations) were issued under the authority of Section 5(b), Chapter 41 of Title 34 of the Code of Alabama, 1975. It covers specific requirements and procedures necessary for proper administration of the Alabama Law regulating the public practice of geology. Over the years some of the rules originally perceived in 1996 were found to be inconsistent with the Alabama Code or were already covered

through the Alabama Code. As such, over the years the Administrative Rules have been modified to be more consistent with the Alabama Code. The Rules were last modified effective June, 2002. Since its inception, the Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists has stood for Sunset Review by the Alabama Legislature three times. Each time it has been complimented on its administration and work effort.

The Board holds regular bi-monthly meetings that are open to all persons - geologists and non-geologists. The Board has urged Alabama licensed geologists to attend Board meetings not only to participate on issues of their concern but hear what new issues are being considered. It is the duty and responsibility of the Board to anticipate future issues that could affect the profession in Alabama. The Board monitors the legislative process each year to insure that activities which could effect our profession are handled in an equitable manner if ever brought to the floor of the legislature. It also interacts with other professional licensing Boards to establish mutual working arrangements and resolve any conflicts concerning professional overlap of responsibilities and licensure issues.

As the Board has matured, one of its principal functions has been to ensure compliance with the ACT - which is - that all geologists working in Alabama on projects dealing with the public welfare are duly licensed in accordance with the Act and governing rules of the Board. Each licensee is automatically charged with assisting the Board in making sure that all geologic work is done by a licensed geologist. By providing this assistance, not only are you helping the Board, but you are helping yourself and your profession. The Board has independent enforcement officers who review all charges before presentation to the Board for action. Those actions requiring more formal resolution for which the Board can not resolve are submitted to the Attorney General's Office for resolution.

Over the past ten years the Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists has sought to bring Alabama Licensure into conformance with the 30 some odd states which also have licensure. The Alabama Board has working reciprocal relationships with several states for recognition of licensure. The Board is an active member in the Association of State Boards of Geologists (ASBOG) where individual states share concerns of mutual interests for the betterment of the profession. Most importantly Alabama also ascribes to the ASBOG testing procedure. All candidates for Alabama licensure are required to pass or to have passed the ASBOG fundamental and professional parts of the examination. This one single requirement separates geologist from pretenders. Over the years, members of the Alabama Board have sat on the testing panel helping formulate the test questions and reviewing the annual testing results. Each test panelist is required to take and pass the exam they are reviewing.

The Board maintains a website ([www.algeobd.state.al.us](http://www.algeobd.state.al.us)) where current information is posted on a regular basis to help provide all geologists with the most recent changes in rules and regulations that might affect the profession. This website also keeps the current copy of the Administrative Rules available to all licensees and individuals seeking information about licensing and working requirements in Alabama.

The Board continues to work for the profession, not only to increase the awareness of the need for professional geologic work where applicable for the safeguard of the public welfare but to also assist the working geologist in maintaining his/her career opportunities through the monitoring of challenges to the profession by others. Remember, the Board works for you and you work for the Board. During the next ten years, as the Board continues to mature, give the Board your attention and be ready to step forward when asked.

T. L. Neathery, Former Board Chairman



## TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP

The Eastern Gulf Region Petroleum Technology Transfer Council, MS Board of Registered Professional Geologists and the AIPG are sponsoring a technology workshop on September 7, 2005. The workshop is titled, "An Integrated Coalbed Methane Exploration Model: Defining Coalbed Methane Exploration Sweetspots". It will be held at the Capital Club, Capital Towers, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor at 125 South Congress Street in Jackson, MS. Andrew Scott will be the workshop instructor.

## RECENT CONTINUING EDUCATION ACTIVITY

On March 4, 2005 Dorothy E. Raymond of the Geological Survey of Alabama lead participants to recently exposed outcrops of the Coker Formation of the Tuscaloosa Group in the Cottondale Quadrangle east of Tuscaloosa. Jack Pashin of the Geological Survey of Alabama discussed deposi-

tional environments of the upper unnamed member of the Coker Formation and provided interpretation of a recently discovered fault in the Coker. Richard Carroll of the Geological Survey of Alabama discussed the age of the Tuscaloosa Group and petrified wood from the formation. Lewis

Dean of the Geological Survey of Alabama discussed mining of gravel from the Tuscaloosa Group and terrace and alluvial deposits in the vicinity of Tuscaloosa. There were 35 persons in attendance for the field trip which included several out of state participants.

Registration must be made by August 31, 2005. The registration fee is \$25. For further information please contact Bennett Bearden at (205)348-1880, [bbearden@geo.ua.edu](mailto:bbearden@geo.ua.edu), or register on-line at

<http://egrpttc.geo.ua.edu>.

## THE BOARD WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



Ms. Hope Paulene is the new Executive Assistant for the Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists. Ms. Paulene has been employed here at the Board Office (Warren & Co., Inc.) for five years and has been responsible for several Boards including the Board of Auctioneers which she is currently the executive assistant. Ms. Paulene is a graduate of Troy State University with

a Bachelor's in Business Administration. Please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Paulene should you need any assistance with your license or any other board business. The Board looks forward to working with Ms. Paulene in the future.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THOSE THAT PASSED THE ASBOG EXAM!

### Fundamentals of Geology

Gregory C. Dill

Brian J. Panetta

Jonathan Shireman

Drew P. Storm

Sheri M Zettle

### Practice of Geology

Rodney M. Kilgore

Brian J. Panetta

Jonathan Shireman

Drew P. Storm

Sheri M Zettle



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## THE BOARD WELCOMES THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Governor Riley has appointed Mr. Thomas Bruner, Dr. David King, Jr., and Mr. Markel Wyatt as new Board Members on the Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists. These new members have been appointed for a three-year term in the following capacities: Mr. Bruner – Mining, Dr. King – Academia; and Mr. Wyatt – Business. These members will replace Mr. David Bowers, Jr. (Mining), Mr. R. B. (Ben) Noble (Business), and Dr. Mark Steltenpohl (Academia). The Board looks forward to working with these newly appointed individuals.

— THANK YOU —

The Board would also like to thank Mr. Bowers, Mr. Noble, and Dr. Steltenpohl for their years of service as Board Members. These members have been very instrumental to the Board's progress during their terms. We wish them well in their future endeavors. Again, thank you for your service and dedication to this Board during your terms.